PICTURES:ANDY WILLSHER

Police on Sunday guard the cordoned off scene where five people were shot and wounded on Saturday night, while a colleague searches for related evidence

Shootings and overdose mar Glastonbury

GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL's 25th anniversary will definitely go ahead in spite of the shooting of five people which marred last weekend's event.

Organiser Michael Eavis told *NME* that police would not oppose next year's anniversary bash, and were happy with the general conduct of festival-goers.

The man arrested in connection with the shooting of five people late on Saturday night had not been charged as *NME* went to press.

The incident took place as Bjork appeared on the *NME* stage and Elvis Costello played on the main stage.

Conflicting details surround the exact circumstances of the shooting, with reports of more than one incident taking place. It is believed that a man in camouflage uniform ran into the crowd near the *NME* stage after shooting another man in the leg. But eyewitnesses also report another shooting outside Joe Banana's, a carpet and blanket stall in the market just off the main stage.

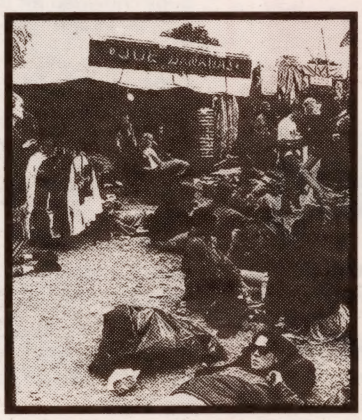
One eyewitness told *NME*: "As we walked past Joe Banana's there was a lot of confusion, people milling about and in the middle of it all was someone lying face down and a woman standing crying. There were ambulances rushing through the crowd."

Initial reports suggested that people were fired on with a shotgun or an air rifle, although police later said a .45 calibre pistol was recovered from the scene.

Festival security apprehended one man and turned him over to police. A second man was also arrested, but later released on bail. The first man was still helping police with their enquiries.

It is believed that the shooting outside Joe Banana's was drug related, although drugs were not recovered from either of the arrested men.

The five people wounded have not been named, although they are described as: an 18-year-old man from Birmingham shot in the stomach; a 44-year-old man from Bexleyheath in London who was wounded in the groin and his 28-year-old wife who was wounded in her buttock; a 20-year-old man from Glamorgan who underwent emergency surgery on his stomach and chest; and a 21-year-old woman from Birmingham who was released from hospital on Sunday after being treated for a slight injury to her arm.



The Joe Banana's stall and (right) Glastonbury owner Michael Eavis at Sunday's press conference

Michael Eavis told *NME* many of the problems regarding public safety from last year had been successfully dealt with.

"There was a noticeable absence of gangs of people selling drugs publicly," he said. "Obviously, the shooting incident spoiled what was otherwise a remarkably peaceful event. One of the people shot is known to the police, but he seems reluctant to tell them who the gunman was. The most worrying thing for us is that people are bringing guns to Glastonbury, but this is a wider problem rather than a reflection on the festival.

"It won't affect the festival next year, which is the 25th anniversary and obviously will be something very special."

The festival was also marred by the death from a drug overdose of a 23-year-old London man early on Sunday morning, the first death in the history of the event.

"We get at least one case like it a day," said Eavis, "and if it happens during waking hours then we can usually get a medical officer to them straight away. The problem here is that it was at 3am and no-one noticed what had happened until it was too late. It's sad, but there's nothing we could have done about it."

Police presence on the site was relatively light until Sunday. According to Inspector Keith Jones of Avon & Somerset Police, there were 243 arrests, 54 for dealing drugs, 83 for possession of drugs, 71 for theft and 35 others. The official attendance was 80,000, but the actual figure appeared to be considerably higher due to people gaining access over the perimeter walls.

"The general estimated number seemed to be between 100,000 and 110,000," said Eavis. "We built a double fence to stop people coming in, but it didn't really work. We lost the battle and we're going to have to work out other ways of maintaining the numbers for next year. We must be doing something right otherwise they would decide to go elsewhere."